

## Message Text

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12

ACTION EA-09

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MOPS, US/RP

SUBJECT: GOP REQUESTS SUSPENSION OF BOMBING EXERCISES OFF ZAMBALES  
COAST

1. LATE JULY 13, EMBASSY RECEIVED DIPLOMATIC NOTE (INITIALED BY FORSEC ROMULO) MARKED "URGENT" REFERRING TO RECENT PRESS REPORTS CONCERNING THREE BOMBING INCIDENTS SINCE JUNE 14 IN WHICH FILIPINO CITIZENS REPORTEDLY HAD BEEN KILLED. DFA ASKS EMBASSY TO INVESTIGATE INCIDENTS AND LOOK INTO WHAT SAFETY MEASURES ARE NECESSARY TO PREVENT RECURRENCE. "UNTIL NEW AND MORE EFFECTIVE SAFETY MEASURES HAVE BEEN AGREED UPON, IT IS REQUESTED THAT ALL BOMBING EXERCISES IN THE AREA BE STOPPED FORTHWITH." DFA SAYS GOP OFFICIALS ARE PREPARED COOPERATE IN INVESTIGATION AND ADOPTION OF SAFETY MEASURES AND ASKS TO BE INFORMED OF INVESTIGATION'S RESULTS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

2. EMBASSY SENT DFA REPLY SAME AFTERNOON. OUR NOTE INFORMS DFA U.S. MILITARY AUTHORITIES HAD "STARTED A COMPLETE INVESTIGATION OF THE REPORTED INCIDENTS" AND THAT WORK OF THE INVESTIGATING PANEL IN CLOSE CONSULTATION WITH PHILIPPINE OFFICIALS IS NOW UNDERWAY. WE POINT OUT THAT CERTAIN STEPS HAVE ALREADY BEEN TAKEN TO TIGHTEN  
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EXISTING SAFETY MEASURES. MOREOVER, "THE USE OF THE

AREA FOR BOMBING EXERCISES WITH EXPLOSIVE AMMUNITION HAS BEEN SUSPENDED PENDING THE COMPLETION OF THE CURRENT INVESTIGATION." OUR NOTE INDICATES U.S. MILITARY AUTHORITIES PREPARED TO EFFECT ADDITIONAL SAFETY MEASURES IN LIGHT OF RESULTS OF PENDING INVESTIGATION.

3. DFA NOTE WAS LEAD STORY IN JULY 14 "EXPRESS" AND "TIMES JOURNAL" AND WAS ALSO FRONT-PAGED IN "BULLETIN TODAY." EDITORIAL CARTOON IN JULY 14 "DAILY EXPRESS" SHOWS NAVY PLANE WITH SIX BANCAS (SMALL FISHING BOATS) MARKED ON ITS FUSELAGE FLYING OVER ANOTHER BANCA. CAPTION READS, "MICKEY MOUSE TO HOME BASE--WE'VE JUST SPOTTED ANOTHER FISHERMAN'S BANCA." ACCOMPANYING EDITORIAL, "PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT," SARCASTICALLY STATES THAT U.S. NAVY PILOT IS PROBABLY MOST EXPERIENCED FIGHTER SINCE "THANKS TO AN OUTMODED BUT STILL EXISTING PACT, HE CAN PRACTICE BOMBING MISSIONS IN THE VAST SUBIC NAVAL BASE, TAKING OFF FROM THE BASE KNOWING FULL WELL THAT HE DOES NOT HAVE TO FLY TO VIETNAM ANY MORE TO TRY TO ACHIEVE PINPOINT ACCURACY. IF IT IS UNFEASIBLE FOR AMERICANS TO HEED THE NOTICE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS SECRETARY ROMULO, ASKING THE AMERICANS TO STOP BOMBING PRACTICE, THE U.S. NAVY MIGHT DO WELL TO CONSIDER MOVING THEIR PRACTICE AREAS FAR OUT TO SEA, WELL BEYOND THE REACH OF STRAY FISHERMEN, AND DEFINITELY OUTSIDE OF KNOWN COMMERCIAL WATERS." ROMULO NOTE IS ALSO LEAD ITEM IN OFFICIAL PNA WIRE JULY 14 BUT SUBIC SPOKESMAN'S DENIAL OF ALLEGED JUNE 28 INCIDENT AS WELL AS HIS STATEMENT ON STEPS NAVY TAKING TO INVESTIGATE OTHER INCIDENTS AND PREVENT RECURRENCE ALSO CARRIED. PNA HAS ALSO CARRIED COMPLETE TEXT OF EMBASSY REPLY TO DFA.

4. COMMENT: PUBLICIZING OF ALLEGED BOMBING INCIDENTS AND DFA NOTE AT THIS TIME SEEMS TRANSPARENT EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN GOP HAND IN BASE TALKS. SO FAR, REPORTAGE AND EDITORIAL COMMENT SUGGEST GOP NOT ANXIOUS FOR ITS PR CAMPAIGN TO GET OUT OF HAND. NONETHELESS, "EXPRESS" CARTOON IS PARTICULARLY VICIOUS.

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## Message Attributes

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